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Aerosmith

Plays On

By Shannel Vance

"We'll keep going until we change 'Walk This Way' to 'Walkers This Way.'"

2001 has, so far, been an exciting year for the rock band Aerosmith. In January, they gave a top-notch performance during the Super Bowl halftime show, performing alongside teen sensations 'N SYNC and Britney Spears. Their new album, *Just Push Play*, was released in March. That same month, the band was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. June saw the start of their tour, and for the past few months they've been rocking out in cities all over the United States. As a matter of fact, Aerosmith will be making their way to Houston on August 29 playing live at the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion.

Even though this year has been a wild ride for the five band members, the past three decades have been even crazier. It's not what you would call a fairy-tale account. It's more along the lines of a soap opera or better yet, an HBO movie. However, the band does have a happy ending ... or rather, a happy new beginning.

The story of Aerosmith begins in 1970 where vocalist Steven Tyler and guitarist Joe Perry first met in Sunapee, N.H. Later that year, after bassist Tom Hamilton, guitarist Brad Whitford and drummer Joey Kramer joined, the band moved to Boston. They soon became popular on the club circuit in

the northeast.

In 1973, Aerosmith released their debut album on Columbia Records and received chart success with "Dream On." *Get Your Wings* came out a year later and stayed in the charts for 85 weeks. But when 1975 arrived, so did Aerosmith. Their album, *Toys in the Attic*, made them bona fide rock stars. The next four albums – *Rocks* (1976), *Draw the Line* (1977), *Live!* (1978) and *Night in the Ruts* (1979) – all fared well and kept the band's momentum going.

Following their 1979 album, the band went through some changes. They replaced Perry and Whitford, who left to work on other projects, with Jimmy Crespo and Rick Dufay. Columbia quickly put out a *Greatest Hits* album, which sold over 6 million copies, before the "new" Aerosmith released *Rock in a Hard Place* in 1982. Shortly after the release of that album, Columbia dropped the band. In 1984, Crespo and Dufay were out and Perry and Whitford were back in.

With Aerosmith once again in tact with the original lineup, they signed a deal with Geffen. *Done With Mirrors*, released in 1986, was a new start for their career. That same year, the band proved that they could roll with the changing times when they made a guest appearance on Run-D.M.C.'s cover of the 1975 Aerosmith hit "Walk This Way." The single went to No. 4 and became a favorite with MTV viewers. It was an opportunity that

helped Aerosmith plan their comeback.

And that's exactly what they did in 1987 with *Permanent Vacation*. The album generated three Top 10 hits, "Dude (Looks Like A Lady)," "Rag Doll" and "Angel." Aerosmith kept the hits coming in 1989 when they put out *Pump*, which contained hits "Janie's Got A Gun" and the ever-popular "Love In An Elevator." Aerosmith didn't just make a comeback, they built a solid foundation for a successful career.

When their world tour for *Pump* ended, the group decided to make a risky move by signing a new contract with Columbia. They still owed Geffen two more albums, but Columbia signed them anyway and patiently waited for them to complete their contract with Geffen.

Get A Grip continued Aerosmith's hit-making streak throughout 1993. The album debuted at No. 1 and spawned the hit singles "Livin' on the Edge," "Cryin'" and "Amazing" (whose music videos turned Alicia Silverstone and Tyler's daughter Liv into the fantasy girls of teenage boys). *Get A Grip* sold over 12 million copies worldwide and won Aerosmith two Grammys.

In 1994, they launched a world tour and took some time to make a stop and perform at Woodstock '94. During this time another "greatest hits" album was assembled entitled *Big Ones*. With that record, their deal with Geffen was completed.

In March 1997, Aerosmith released their debut for Columbia, *Nine Lives*. The album went gold within four weeks of its release. Their contribution to the 1998 *Armageddon* soundtrack proved to be a smart move, earning them yet another hit with "I Don't Want To Miss A Thing."

Today, Aerosmith is celebrating the release of *Just Push Play*. This is the first album to be produced by Tyler and Perry. "When we first started writing the songs, they were sounding so good," said Perry. "We decided not to bother going through the same old thing of learning the songs over again just to go into a studio. So we got in with our co-producers, Marty Frederickson and Mark Hudson, and gave it a shot."

The boys, who came out of New Hampshire in the '70s with their bluesy rock and bad boy image, have endured over the years and have appealed to multiple generations. "Each generation gets exposed to our music," explained Perry. "There's something new there that they like. It's also about good songs. We're lucky enough to come up with one now and then."

"It's also the diversity of the songs we write," added Tyler. "It goes from one end of the spectrum to the other."

Aerosmith is one of America's longest running rock and roll bands and they don't show signs letting go of their reign. According to Tyler, "We'll keep going until we change 'Walk This Way' to 'Walkers This Way.'" Sounds like a hit! ©